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MR. ADAMS'S

S E R M O N S

O N T H E

FALL AND RECOVERY OF MANKIND.





1223

Our LAPSE in ADAM, and REDEMPTION by  
CHRIST considered,

I N T W O

S E R M O N S,

PREACHED AT STERLING,

I N T H E

COMMONWEALTH of MASSACHUSETTS,

The 16th of JANUARY, 1791.

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BY ZABDIEL ADAMS, A. M.

PASTOR of the CHURCH in Lunenburg.

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*Published at the desire of many who heard them.*

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## ADVERTISEMENT.

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*THE* author takes this method to inform the Subscribers, and others who heard the following Sermons, that as they were delivered only from some loose and general hints, without the most distant thought of their being ever made more publick, he was rather disagreeably affected at receiving a request for printing them. But since the request has been presented, he has endeavoured to recollect the ideas then suggested, and flatters himself that no material one is omitted. The sermons will evidently retain their original features, though it is confessed, that by several additions they have grown to a greater size. To publish sentiments on subjects so differently thought of, and disputable as the following, cannot be eligible. But as every person has a right to his own opinion, the author, little anxious what others may think or say of him, calmly submits them to public censure. If they may, by the blessing of God, be the means of diffusing a spirit of candor, among different men who keep their minds open to conviction; and especially if they so impress the mind of the reader, with a sense of his loss in Adam, as to convince him of the necessity of an interest in Christ, through whom justification and life are only to be obtained; and put him on proper measures to possess himself of covenant qualifications, for future happiness, he will consider himself amply compensated for all his pains; and though others may scoff and condemn, will abundantly rejoice.







MR. A D A M S'S

S E R M O N S

ON THE

FALL AND RECOVERY OF MANKIN<sup>D</sup>.

ROMANS, Vth CHAPTER, 19th VERSE.

FOR AS BY ONE MAN'S DISOBEDIENCE MANY WERE MADE SINNERS; SO, BY THE OBEDIENCE OF ONE, SHALL MANY BE MADE RIGHTEOUS.

AMONG the preachers of the gospel a great diversity of practice prevails, not only as to the *manner*, but as to the *matter* of their *publick* exhibitions. Some almost constantly dwell on the moral precepts of the gospel; whilst others studiously avoiding these topicks, entertain their hearers chiefly with the doctrinal parts of revelation. These are extremes which all will carefully avoid who take St. Paul for their pattern, and mean to be governed by his advice. *He kept back nothing that was profitable to his hearers. He testified both to the Jews and Greeks repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ; and shunned not to declare the whole counsel of God.* Now as all scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction and instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto every good work, every faithful minister will, by a suitable attention to all parts of revealed truth, endeavour to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased by his own blood. And though he will by no means neglect to explain  
and

and enforce the moral precepts of the gospel, pointing out to christians the way of their duty; yet as the doctrines thereof, when properly interpreted, give us exalted ideas of the wisdom, justice, and goodness of God, and furnish the strongest arguments to an holy temper, in which the essence of religion consists, he *must* believe it to be his duty, at certain times, to discourse on the peculiar doctrines of revelation; that having laid this foundation, he may build thereon that superstructure of moral and evangelical duties, which, when enforced by motives derived from these doctrines, will, by the influence of the spirit, strongly impel his hearers to those pious and devout exercises of the heart, which qualify them for, and by the constitution of the covenant of grace, introduce them to the happiness of the heavenly world. Deeply impressed with these thoughts, I shall this day *earnestly*, though modestly, *contend for the faith once delivered unto the saints*; and without pretending to any superior sagacity or information, shall, according to my ideas of duty, proceed to give my sentiments, concerning the *lapse and recovery of mankind*; doctrines differently explained by different men; from which angry disputes have arisen in the christian church, to the detriment of that *charity which is the bond of perfectness, the end of the commandment, and the fulfilling of the law*.

IN the course of my reading, and from a long acquaintance with many of my fellow men, I have had the best reason to conclude, that whilst some have considered the fall as having no pernicious influence on the human race, subjecting them *only* to temporal death; others have carried their sentiments to a contrary extreme, and view *Adam's sin*, in all senses, the sin of all his numerous descendants. They even go so far as to suppose that great numbers of infants are now suffering the extremest misery in hell, merely on account of their being the unhappy children of a sinful father, or from their participation of his guilt. They further believe that all mankind have *totally* lost the image of God; the power of election, or liberty of choice; all moral goodness, as well as all principles of holiness; and consequently that they are *totally corrupt*, and *wholly inclined to evil*, and that *continually*. Now these great extremes appear to me to be wide from the real truth, and faulty in a certain degree. The truth, in this as in most other cases, lies in a happy medium between them, as I shall endeavour to shew in the sequel of this discourse. In farther treating on which, I shall arrange my thoughts under the two following heads:

#### I. SHALL

I. SHALL say something of the *one man's disobedience by which many were made sinners.* And

II. SHALL enquire how the many, or all, were made sinners by his disobedience.

UNDER the first head we may observe, that by the *one man*, we are to understand Adam, the first of the human race, created in an extraordinary manner out of the dust of the earth, but yet made in the image of God. Now this image consisted, not in the form of his body, but in the powers and qualities of his mind; as having dominion over all terrestrial creatures. As God is the supreme Governor, man bears some likeness to him, as dominion was given to him, *over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the face of the earth.* This part of the divine image, however impaired, is not totally lost. But the most essential part of the image of God in which man was made, consisted in that perfection of his nature, which was endued with *reason and will, with understanding and true holiness.* And in this respect he was made but a little lower than the angels, and crowned with glory and honor. Concerning God, we read, that *his understanding is infinite; he telleth the number of the stars, and calleth them all by name.* And has not man an understanding, which, though infinitely inferior to his Maker's, capacitates him, when properly cultivated, to unfold a thousand difficulties, to rove from star to star, to ascertain the laws of the heavenly bodies, to calculate eclipses, and to predict, with certainty, many future and very distant events? Though this part of the divine image may be greatly effaced, yet none can with reason pretend that it is totally lost. Again; he still retains something of the image of the Creator, as he is a moral agent, has a sense of right and wrong, and a will to chuse the good and refuse the evil, though not, we may well suppose, in the degree that Adam enjoyed it before he fell; yet so as to make him, a subject of law, responsible for his actions, and capable of rewards and punishments. Lastly, he was made in the image of God, not only as he had a power of acquiring a holy temper, but had a principle of holiness implanted in his first formation. If we do not believe this, it is difficult to conceive how God could pronounce this part of his work *very good*; or how Solomon could say, *God made man upright, but they have sought out many inventions.* Or what consistent meaning we can put on the Apostle's exhortation to the Ephesians, *be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and put on the new man, who after God is created in righteousness and true holiness?* What more rational interpretation can we put on these words,



words, than that man was first created with the principles of holiness in his heart ; that he lost them by his offence in eating the forbidden fruit ; and his posterity also ; and that *they* must be renewed to this temper, or recovered to this character, or never be fit for the kingdom of heaven ? The conclusion therefore is, that this part of the divine image was lost in the fall : and that though there still remain many amiable qualities in the hearts of men, yet that they are destitute of all holiness till renewed by the spirit of God. But what was that sin of our first father by which he in part lost the image of God, and entailed the same disadvantage on his numerous progeny ? It was his transgression of a positive command not to eat of *the tree of knowledge of good and evil*. This prohibition was equivalent to a command to keep his senses and his appetites under the control of reason. It was an easy task which the Lord of all saw fit to impose on his new formed creature, man. Though as a rational creature he was obliged to obey all the laws of his nature ; yet on this simple condition his happiness was suspended ; and this was made the term of his enjoying the continued favor of his Creator. And had he been obedient in this single instance, he and his posterity would have been continued in endless life. But wonderful to relate, this man, newly created, and formed in the divine image, with frequent communications from his Maker, and the fate of his posterity depending, transgressed the law and involved his offspring, together with himself, in a scene of wretchedness unutterable, had it not been for the advent of a Saviour ! This sin was perpetrated through the influence of that malicious fiend, *who walks about seeking whom he may devour*. The Devil, in the form of a serpent, to which he communicated speech, attacked the woman, *the weaker vessel*, propounded a doubtful question, then denied the truth of God's threatening, gave her a contrary promise, and used the name of God to confirm it. Thus subtilly did he manage in seducing our first parents from their duty ! But though the grand adversary was concerned in this temptation, yet the man and woman were highly culpable in entering into *parlance* with him, doubting the veracity of their Creator, and eating the witholden fruit : For it must here be remembered, that even the temptation of Satan is no excuse for sin. He can do no more than tempt, and if *we resist him he will flee from us*. This sin of the first founders of our race, was attended with aggravating circumstances, and was a virtual violation of all the commands of the decalogue. The first was broken by withdrawing faith from God, and placing it in Satan : The second, by giving a sort of worship

to



to this malignant spirit, in preferring his declarations before those of their liege or rightful Lord : The third by profaning the name of God in treating it with so much contempt as to credit the devil rather than Jehovah, when there was a contrariety in their declarations. And the fourth also, if what some surmise be true, that this sin was committed on the Sabbath. The fifth command requires obedience to superiors. Eve therefore, in not consulting her husband, and Adam in hearkening to his wife more than to God, really violated it. And what did they less than murder their children ; when they could not but know if the threatening was fulfilled, it would prevent their existence, or reduce them to destruction ; directly in opposition to the sixth command which requires us *not to kill*. The seventh command prohibits the indulgence of the sensual appetite. But did not Adam more attend to the propensities of animal nature, than to the command of God in eating this fair and tempting fruit ? And was the eighth unbroken by him when he manifested such discontent with his present condition ; and in order to better it, as he supposed, surreptitiously took the inhibited fruit, in the face of that authoritative injunction, *thou shalt not steal*. The ninth requires not to *bear false witness* ; and this virtually implies that we should not receive a false accusation against any. But did not Adam, in this instance, pass a false judgment on the fruit, and admit the false accusations of Satan against his sovereign Lord ? Adam and his happy companion had full liberty to range amidst a wilderness of sweets, and freely to regale themselves with all that variety of delicious fruits, with which the garden of Eden abounded, excepting one single tree. Did they not, therefore, discover the strong prevalence of the covetous desire, when they invaded the interdicted fruit, and presumptuously partook of that to which they had no title ? By this brief enumeration of particulars, it appears that their sin was *aggravated, extensive and complicated* ; amounting to a breach of all the ten commands ; and if these commands, as *most* suppose, comprehended the whole circle of moral duties, *then* in this single act, he violated the law of his nature, and was guilty of a crime of the deepest dye.

I COME in the second place to enquire how *many*, or all mankind, *were made sinners by his disobedience*. It seems by the representation of scripture, our only guide in this matter, that Adam's sin was not in its influence confined to himself, but in some way or another descended to his children. He was their natural, if not their federal head, and his fortune therefore they must follow. Now though Adam was not naturally immortal, yet if he had been obedient in the single instance of the forbid-

den fruit, he was, by partaking of the tree of life, *to have lived for ever* and his posterity likewise. But in case of disobedience, it was threatened that he should die. *In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.* And accordingly the sentence was, *dust thou art, and to dust thou shalt return.* Now this sentence was not confined to him alone, but extended to all that proceeded from his loins. Here two questions naturally arise. First, what are we to understand by this death? And secondly, how comes it to fall upon Adam's posterity? To the first question, it may be answered; if we consider the words of the threatening in connexion with the sentence afterwards passed, we should suppose that nothing more than temporal death, with the evils that precede and usher it into the world was intended. But yet some assert, that *temporal, spiritual and eternal death* are all meant by that threatening. But this we know cannot be true, according to St. Paul's manner of expressing himself on the subject. Tho' *natural*, and even *spiritual death* may be intended thereby, yet *eternal destruction*, as it is commonly understood, could not be meant, if we take him as our expositor. For he tells us in the chapter of my text, speaking of the consequence of Adam's sin, *that death hath passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.* Now it is not true that eternal death *hath*, or *ever will pass* upon all men; for the righteous will be received into heaven through the merit of Christ. I say, therefore, that nothing more than *temporal and spiritual death* can possibly be meant by that term. As to temporal or natural death, that this will sooner or later fall upon all the sons of Adam by reason of his sin, none deny. But how or by what means does this take place upon the offspring of Adam? How are we all thus made sinners by him? I answer, by *imputation*. In this way natural death comes upon all the sons of men. There are some, I am sensible, who chuse not to hear any thing of imputation in this sense of the word; and even others are to be found, who, though they allow the imputation of Christ's righteousness, deny in the most unaccountable manner, the imputation of Adam's sin. But as the word is capable of a rational interpretation in this sense, and as it has been used by former divines, I therefore retain it, and assert that it is by the *imputation* of the legal effect of Adam's sin, that all his children become mortal, and will sooner or later die a natural death. If any dislike the term, they cannot deny the doctrine, if they are believers in divine revelation. St. Paul asserts it, and has used arguments to prove it, in the chapter of my text. *By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin.* And in Corinthians he tells us, *As in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive.* And to prove his

his assertion in the twelfth verse, he thus argues in the two following ones ; *for until the law, death was in the world, yet death is not imputed where there is no law. Nevertheless, death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression.* The meaning of which is this, though there were both sin and death in that long space which intervened between Adam and Moses, yet as there was no positive command threatening death as the penalty of disobedience, during that term, therefore men did not die for their own sins, but for the disobedience of Adam ; for where there is no law subjecting men to death for disobedience, *there certainly can be no transgression.*

2dly. As Adam was not only subjected to natural death by his sin, but was also condemned by the law of his nature as a transgressor, having lost that image of God which consisted in *righteousness and true holiness*, and which was the supreme excellence of his nature ; so his posterity, by imputation, come into the world devoid of holy principles, and, consequently, as not coming up to the requirements of the law of their nature, are in a state of condemnation by it, even previously to their commission of any actual transgression. Though this, in the eye of the law, is an important defect, for which they are doomed, by the righteous constitution of heaven, to many disabilities ; yet it does not come up to our ideas of the formal nature of sin ; to constitute which there must be the consent of the will, in a person, who is a free agent, or has arrived to years of understanding. It is a defect also which must be remedied, or they can never obtain justification at the bar of God ; never become *recti in lege*. Whether this is the idea that some men mean to express by our being born into the world in a state of nature *less perfect than Adam was when he first came out of the hands of his Maker*, or what others intend by the *corruption and depravity of human nature*, I neither know nor care. It is an idea I have been led to adopt from reading the scriptures ; without which I cannot run a complete parallel between Adam and Christ, who are heads of their respective seeds, and covenants, and counterparts to each other ; nor give a full and consistent interpretation of several passages in the New Testament. This is called by some spiritual death, and not improperly, if we do not include in the notion of it, the anguish of a guilty conscience ; and the infliction of new sorrows on the soul. The anguish of a guilty conscience, and the infliction of positive pains on the soul, are the effects not of imputed, but of actual and personal sin. But still Adam's descendants are *spiritually* dead, as they have no seeds of holiness in their hearts, no exercises or sensations of the divine life ; and *judicially*



as they are condemned by the mouth of the Lawgiver, or by his law. And being thus condemned by the law as dead to all holy sensations, they must, had it not been for the new constitution of grace, introduced by Christ, either been held for ever, under the bondage of the grave, or some way made positively wretched. But since the provision of a Saviour, there is now no room for such a supposition; since he certainly justifies *all* from the condemnation of death; and all who *believe* in him from all other condemnation, whether arising from the legal effects of Adam's sin imputed, or from their own actual transgression; and reinstates them in the favor of God. Now, if those who have never been guilty of personal disobedience are to be raised from the dead as well as others; the presumption is, from the known character of God, and his acknowledged benevolence, that they are raised, not for the purpose of being made positively wretched in hell; but happy in the presence of God in heaven; all legal disabilities being first removed, and an holy principle implanted, without which they shall never see the Lord. Now this, in a manner explicable to us, is done in the new birth; and therefore this new birth is necessary for all the sons of Adam, of every age, character and condition. This seems to be the representation of scripture, for it declares, *except a man*, it is translated, but it ought to have been *except any one* (for that is the force of the Greek article *τις*) *is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God*. And what better reason can possibly be assigned for the absolute necessity of the new birth, for all men universally, of every age, nation and character, whether they have been guilty of actual sins or not, than the sentiment I have been advancing under this head, namely, that all men are condemned by the law of God as being destitute of any seeds or principles of holiness, until renewed by the spirit of God, and recovered thereto by the spiritual process of regeneration. Upon the whole; the bible represents mankind by nature as universally condemned by the law, particularly in our context; *the judgment was by one to condemnation; and by the offence of one the judgment came upon all men to condemnation*. Now that this condemnation was to something more than natural death, may be fairly argued from this consideration; that the justification by the obedience of Christ, intends more than a resurrection from the grave. And as the condemnation on the one part, must be as extensive as the justification on the other (saying only that Christ's obedience in *merit* so far exceeds Adam's disobedience in *demerit*, as to deliver from personal as well as imputed sins) hence the argument is *highly probable*, if not *absolutely conclusive*, that merely by Adam's sin his posterity is subjected



jected to other disabilities than natural death; because, by Christ's obedience they are exempted from other penal effects, besides death. I therefore, on the truth of the foregoing observations, proceed to observe further, that if those who have never been guilty of actual sins (to which the consent of the will is necessary) are condemned by the law to something more than natural death, or in a sense different from it, then surely those who have made Adam's sin, in the fullest sense, their own, by the commission of many actual offences, are condemned in a fuller or higher sense: from the penal effects of which, however, the obedience of Christ is sufficient to exempt them. Before I proceed to the next head of discourse, it is necessary, to prevent any mistakes, that I should subjoin the following observation; that though Adam's sin was in its legal effects imputed to his posterity in the sense above mentioned; yet we are not from thence to conclude, that it is, in the strictest sense of the word, the sin of his descendants. This is impossible. Sin is a quality intransferable. We may be sufferers even to death by it; yet not conscious of his guilt; nor is it possible to repent of it as we may and ought, of those which we have personally committed, by the free consent of our own wills. Adam, when he offended, was *afraid, ashamed, and conscious of evil desert*; hence it is said he perceived himself naked; and endeavoured to hide himself from the presence of the Lord. But though we ought to be ashamed and repent of our own sins, yet for Adam's offence we cannot feel any such sensations. All therefore that is intended by the imputation of his sin to his posterity is, that the effects of it are set to our account, that we are treated as sinners, and are subjected to a thousand inconveniences on the account thereof. I will now illustrate my idea by the following example. In some European kingdoms, where the title of nobility obtains, if a nobleman is guilty of treason, together with his life, he forfeits his estate and honors; and this forfeiture descends to his children; they lose their estate and honors by reason of his sin. And yet, who in his senses can believe that the sin of treason perpetrated by the father, is in any sense, except its legal effects, the sin of his children? In a sense somewhat analogous, it may be observed; that often times parents, rendered infirm by a course of intemperance and debauchery, propagate children under these unhappy circumstances, who all their lives undergo great langours, and often times die prematurely on that very account; and yet most certainly we cannot think that the debauchery of the parents was, in the strictest sense, the sin of the children. Again; if we chuse a representative to legislate for us, and he from sinister, or other evil motives,

tives, is induced to concur with others in the enactment of injurious and oppressive laws (as the case is supposable, and I believe has sometimes been the truth of fact) the sin considered as such is peculiar to himself, but the evil effects fall upon his constituents, however innocent, till the laws are repealed, or cease to operate. Thus Adam who was our natural, if not our federal head, has by his disobedience entailed many miseries upon us; and thus we are by imputation sinners, or rather sufferers through him. But then I go on and say farther, that *through one man's disobedience, many or all were made sinners actually or inherently*. In order to conceive how this takes place we must consider, that men are now born into the world, without a principle of holiness in their hearts; with a less perfect nature than Adam, or in a state of corruption and depravity; and being moreover subjected to death with the various evils and calamities connected with, and attendant on it, do, under these several disadvantages, unavoidably commit iniquity, when they arrive at the exercise of their rational or mental powers. To this sad event, viz. *actual sin*, each of the causes abovementioned contributes its respective proportion; but natural death has perhaps the main influence in the production of it. To perceive this, we need only advert to the Apostle's records in the 12th verse of the chapter from whence our text was taken quoted before, and make a small alteration in the translation; as there is great reason to believe the present one is faulty. The verse is this; *By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; so death hath passed upon all men, for that all have sinned*. From this verse we collect with the utmost certainty, that Adam's sin introduced sin and death, into our world, together with all the temporal evils attendant on humanity, pain, sickness, sorrow and vanity. If it had been rightly translated it would have told us very plainly in *what way*, or by what influence it occasioned the reign of actual sin among the children of men. To possess ourselves of this idea we need only correct a small error in the translation of the latter clause of the verse, and instead of the words *for that*, substitute the words *upon which*, or *in consequence of which*, *all have sinned*. The words *ἐφ' ᾧ*, translated for that, are not only capable of this interpretation, but this is their invariable meaning throughout the New Testament, as I could easily make evident; and also in other Greek authors, as has been made evident in a degree, by a learned writer, who lived in this century, and died with the deserved character of a just and great critick. The proper meaning of the passage according to this interpretation (which I suppose is perfectly just) is this, that death was the imputed effect of the first man's sin; and that this death,

with

with all its preceding and attendant inconveniences, has occasioned the universal reign of actual sin, among all those who come to a capacity of actual transgression. Death has introduced great disorders among the human species. It has destroyed that nice balance between their reason, appetites and passions, which God first established. It has by reason of the curse on the ground, which makes a livelihood difficult and hard to be obtained, even by enervating toil, called in scripture the *sweat of the brow*, occasioned those numerous frauds, chicanery and circumvention, which not only disgrace human nature, but make the world a scene of woe. Had it not been for death, and the loss of that image of God which consisted in *true holiness*, the mind would have been clear, the affections calm; the appetites subordinate to reason, the man happy; all his various powers and affections being harmoniously subservient to the end of his creation, and powerfully, though sweetly impelling him, to a uniform obedience to law divine. But now being subjected by the righteous constitution of heaven, to death and its attendant troubles, temptations are multiplied upon us from every side, that we cannot so fully resist them, as to preserve the rectitude of our conduct; but do *all*, in a greater or lesser degree, actually offend. Poverty and riches, dominion and servitude, honour and infamy, the effects of the apostacy, have their peculiar temptations to sin, which few or none resist. Our fears of death subjecting us to bondage, occasion discontent, anxious solicitude, and perplexing concern, which constitute the formal nature of sin. And from the less perfect state of our nature, the consequence of the fall, and the sickness and death dependent on it, arise those numerous *lusts which war against the soul, and bring us into captivity to the law of sin*. From a clear perception of this the Apostle cried out, *O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death!* Some have supposed that this alludes to a practice prevailing among some nations of tying a criminal to a dead *sinking carcase*, by way of punishment. But if this were the allusion, the true meaning of the phrase is this, since my body subjected to death, entices me to so many sins, who will deliver me from it, or from this *mortal body?* which is a proper translation of the phrase. And then adds, for his own comfort, as well as the consolation of others, *I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord*, that this deliverance is to be obtained, through the institutions, grace, and reconciliation of the Saviour. But then, though these appetites, inclinations, and desires have become stronger, and reason weaker by means of the lapse, yet they do not constitute the formal nature of sin, till they gain the consent of the will. Though we may be  
tempted



*tempted by our own heart's lusts, and enticed, yet it is only when lust is conceived, that it bringeth forth sin, and sin when it is perfected, by giving the consent of the heart, bringeth forth death.* Thus I have shewn you how, by the disobedience of *one many are made sinners.* If my explanations of the manner, in which mankind become sinners, in consequence of Adam's sin, be different from what has heretofore been common; yet the conclusion of the whole matter is, on the scheme above suggested, similar to that of ancient divines, who made Adam's sin, either mediately or immediately, the cause or occasion of all the sins of men. This shews that disputes on this subject are for the most part not essential; being either verbal; or rather about the modes of its conveyance; than against the truth, or existence of the doctrine itself. I shall therefore close what I have said, under the doctrinal part of this subject, by this charitable observation, viz. that whoever believes the fall of Adam to be the foundation of Christ's advent in our world, and that scheme of grace which is mentioned in the gospel, believes all that is necessary, to regulate his practice, and form his temper, by leading him to a cheerful acceptance of the redemption through the Saviour.

#### I M P R O V E M E N T.

FIRST, from what has been said, we learn, that the sin of the first man has introduced a tragical scene upon the stage of the present world. Death, pain, toil, vanity, and a thousand dreadful disorders have entered by this door, and have made our earth, an hospital of diseases, *a place of skulls, a field of blood.* From this source carnage and destruction are spread around us; doleful spectacles are presented to our view, and the most heart breaking separations frequently take place, among the dearest friends, the most intimate connexions. Hence the rosy cheek, the ruby lips, and ivory teeth lose their attractive charms; and those who once possessed them are turned to ugliness and deformity. Hence *we hear the voice of lamentation and mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, and refusing to be comforted, because they are not.* When we contemplate the miseries of mankind, originating from this fountain, we are often compelled to shed the tear of compassion; though for the sin that occasioned them, we cannot properly repent; for repentance implies *consciousness of guilt, self condemnation, and change of conduct,* which, though necessary for our own, cannot be for another's sins.

2dly.



2dly. A serious review of the foregoing subject, should make us all humble in our own sight. *Pride was never made for fallen man.* Yet though our blood is under one common attainder, we find these ebullitions of pride which are truly surprising. One takes to himself important airs, on account of the noble or ancient blood which runs in his veins. Another is proud of his beauty; a third of the magnitude of his possessions, the number of his acres and the fullness of his coffers; a fourth of his rich attire; and a fifth, of his dignity and posts of honor; and on these accounts are induced to despise their fellow men, not thus distinguished. To suppress these risings of vanity, let us all look to the rock whence we were hewn, and to the hole of the pit whence we were digged, to Adam and Eve our first progenitors; to the crime by which their dignity was lessened, and the imputation of it to us, by which our glory is obscured. The little paultry distinctions which take place among the children of men, are not worth regarding; *distinctions*, which will be soon levelled in the grave to which we are destined, where the rich and the poor, the honorable and the base, the beautiful and deformed, the learned and ignorant, will lie neglected in one undistinguished and promiscuous mass. After the revolution of a few years, we must all go to that world *from whose bourn no traveller returns*; where these distinctions will be of no avail; and where real righteousness shall alone be exalted. *Let not therefore the wise man glory in his wisdom; neither let the mighty man glory in his might; nor let the rich man glory in his riches; but let him that glorieth, glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord, who exercise loving kindness, and judgment, and righteousness in the earth.*

3dly. UPON the explication given in the preceding discourse, we learn, how to interpret and apply the following texts, and other similar ones, to be found in the sacred volume, which have been often quoted in this connexion, as an illustration of man's depravity, or fall. A few only shall I mention, and they are the following. *I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me. That which is born of the flesh is flesh. Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? You hath he quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins; and were by nature children of wrath even as others, &c.* Though I shall not stop to give a particular explanation of each of these passages, I shall observe in general, that they do not prove that Adam's sin is, in the strictest sense, the sin of his descendants; but only that as men are born without any principles of holiness, and are subjected to death, as a penal effect of the fall, they very early go astray after they have come to the use of their reason and moral powers; that all need to be

regenerated, and whilst under the disadvantages to which death and the evils preceding it, subject us, we fall short of the requirements of the law, and become actual sinners, even in the first dawn of reason. The expressions are, some of them, highly figurative, and when reduced to a proper and literal meaning, intend no more, than that we are all born under such disabilities, as to be condemned by the law, and that being influenced, in our depraved nature, by a thousand powerful temptations, we very soon become actual transgressors of it, clearly evincing that the original sin of our first father, is the prolific source of all, even the most early and aggravated personal offences. Here suffer me to say, that however some persons deny the pernicious effects of Adam's sin to his posterity; yet every unprejudiced man, who reads the scripture with attention, must perceive that the fall of man, is the foundation of the whole scheme of gospel grace. Hence the contrast between Adam and Christ. And, in my opinion, a man might as well deny revelation in general, as to deny that the one man's disobedience is the cause, in some way, or another, of all the sins of mankind.

4thly. IF men are, in consequence of Adam's sin, all born destitute of holiness, hence we see the necessity of regeneration, or the new birth to all the children of men, infants not excepted. On no other foundation can this doctrine, which all believe, stand with so much propriety, as on this. *As without holiness no man or person can see the Lord*; and as upon my principles children are born without it; hence *they*, as well as the *adult*, must be regenerated, or must be excluded the kingdom of heaven. Some persons, from this principle, who are great sticklers for absolute unconditional decrees, have concluded, that some infants, dying at that period, are sent down to the miseries of hell. But as I cannot believe the dreadful sentiment, I give the following reasons for my non-belief. 1st. If the sentence pronounced against Adam had been strictly fulfilled, he never could have had any posterity at all. But from anticipating a Saviour to come, his life was protracted, and opportunity granted for having children, who, without any fault of their own, are subjected to vanity and death. Now can we suppose that *God who sent his Son into the world, not to condemn it, but that it might through him be saved*, would have raised any, who had never been guilty of any personal transgressions, from the grave, with a view to make them positively wretched? Where, on this supposition, is the grace of the Father, and the boundless compassion of his Son? No, he never would have disturbed their ashes, but left them peacefully *to have slept out the Sabbath of the tomb*, if he had not raised them  
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for a better state. Besides, if this were not the case, how could it be said of Adam's posterity that the *creature*, meaning man, *was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him, who hath subjected the same in hope.* These considerations make it extremely probable, that as a Saviour is provided, whose business, in part, was to restore the loss we sustained by the lapse, to recover from the penal effects and disabilities of the first man's sin, that no one was ever denied, who had not made it to all moral purposes his own, by the free choice of his will, in actual disobedience. And that which is made probable from the character of God and his gracious design in sending a Saviour into the world, is rendered almost a certainty from the words of Christ, who knew his Father's will, and still spake very favorably of those who fell in Adam, but *had*, and could *have*, no sins of their own; *suffer little children to come unto me and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of heaven:* And again, speaking to the adult, he says, *except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.* The pious and very ingenious Doctor Watts, entertained a peculiar sentiment, on this head, which was, that the children of believing parents, who never live to years of discretion, shall be saved; but that the children of unbelievers will never be raised from the dead; shall always remain under the dominion of the grave, in a state of insensibility. He could not admit the shocking idea of thousands of little creatures weltering under the positive inflictions of the divine wrath! and to avoid it, had recourse to the scheme of thought above suggested. But as this militates with the notion that all shall be raised to life, a doctrine clearly held forth in sundry places of scripture, the more rational opinion is, that all who die in infancy, will, through the grace of the gospel, and the merit of the Redeemer, be saved: but then it must be by passing through the new birth, like those who are adult. The main difference is, that those who have come to the exercise of their mental powers, and have been guilty of many personal sins, must *seek* for this change, *desire* to be *born again*, and made *new creatures in Christ*; otherwise their condition will be deplorable indeed: whereas, with regard to children the case is different; for as the disability came without their fault, the recovery from it comes without their seeking. Let me therefore, by way of conclusion, exhort all who are still in their sins, and are consequently unsanctified, and unpardoned, to seek those gifts and gracious qualifications from Christ, the deliverer of our race, the friend of man; and to do it in the diligent use of those means, which he has instituted, by *prayers, reading the word, meditation, and hearing.* Remembering

membering that *faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. Watch therefore at wisdom's gates, and wait at the posts of her doors; cry after knowledge, and lift up thy voice for understanding; seek for her as silver, and search for her as for hid treasures; then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God; for as he has never said to any of the seed of Jacob, seek ye my face in vain; so we have abundant reason to believe, that none who thus come to God through Christ, shall in any wise be cast out.*—A M E N.

END OF THE FIRST DISCOURSE.

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S E C O N D P A R T.

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ROMANS, Vth CHAPTER, 19th VERSE.

FOR AS BY ONE MAN'S DISOBEDIENCE MANY WERE MADE SINNERS; SO, BY THE OBEDIENCE OF ONE, SHALL MANY BE MADE RIGHTEOUS.

THE apostacy and redemption of the human race are two most memorable events in the history of the world; events deserving our particular *notice*, our *admiration*, and I had almost said our *gratitude*; for such is the present state of mankind with respect to future happiness, under the kingdom of the Messiah, that it cannot be said that we are eventually losers by the fall. Nay, it may well be questioned, whether the sons of Adam in general, have not *now* a greater probability of securing the lasting felicity of their souls, since Christ has died for them, than if they never had fallen. This seems to be an idea held forth by some passages of scripture; and on any other supposition, it is difficult to perceive how the *seed of the woman* has *bruised the serpent's head*; or how in the contest between these two seeds, the advantage on the whole is gained by Christ. But be this as it will, the *lapse* and *recovery* of mankind, may be contemplated with admiration. They display the perfections of Deity in the most illustrious manner; they shew the wisdom, justice, power and compassion of God, in the clearest and most conspicuous light;



light ; as well as point out his sovereignty. That he should suffer sin to come into the world, through the temptation of the devil ; that he should bring good out of evil, provide a Saviour for fallen men, when he passed by the fallen angels ; and that he should grant peace and pardon to the rebellious, through the death and sufferings of his own Son, are matters which we can ascribe only to the inscrutable wisdom, boundless compassion, and adorable sovereignty of God. These are matters of delightful contemplation to pious minds ; and though neither *men* nor *angels* can comprehend these unfathomable counsels of heaven ; yet they are the theme of their devout adoration and praise. *Glory to God in the highest, peace on earth and good will towards men.* The fall of which the heathens were sensible, (though they knew not to what cause to ascribe it) came by Adam ; but the recovery from it comes by one greater man, the Lord from heaven. This is the *one* intended in our text, *through whose obedience many are made righteous.* He is a counterpart to the *first*, and therefore called the *second Adam.* *He was made a quickening spirit, as the first man Adam was made a living soul.* The scripture, in plain and unequivocal language, represents him as the *Son of God, the first born of every creature, the brightness of his Father's glory, and the express image of his person.* Nay, it speaks of him as an incarnate God, *the word made flesh.* Hence says St. John in the first chapter of his gospel ; *And the word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, (the glory of the only begotten of the Father) full of grace and truth.* To the same purpose is the following passage in the 1st Timothy, *iiiid chapter, 16th verse ; Great is the mystery of godliness, God manifest in the flesh, &c.* for he took the nature of man into a close, though inexplicable union with his divine person. *He took not on him the nature of angels,* because for them he did not appear as a Saviour ; *but he took on him the seed of Abraham, that he might redeem them from the grave.* Agreeably says the Apostle to the Hebrews, *for as much as the children were partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same ; that through death he might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil ; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their life time subject to bondage.* The nature of man was contained in him, as well as in the first Adam ; only with this very great advantage, that whereas the first was but a *mere man, made in the likeness of God ;* the second was a divine person made in the similitude of man. Hence in the 2d chapter of Philippians, the Apostle thus speaks concerning him : *who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but made himself of no reputation ; and took upon him the form of a ser-*  
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want, and was made in the LIKENESS of men, &c. Thus much concerning THE ONE through whose obedience many are made righteous. We shall say something concerning this obedience, and shew in what it consisted. In order to treat of it in a methodical manner, I shall divide it, according to the practice of ancient divines, into *active* and *passive*. With respect to his *active* obedience, the following things may be observed. He was perfectly righteous or obedient prior to his assumption of the human nature, and remained so ever after; and lest he should be contaminated by his union with our nature, he was *conceived of the Holy Ghost*, and in a miraculous manner born of a *pure virgin*. Behold a virgin shall conceive and bare a son, and shall call his name Immanuel. Isaiah vii, 14. After that union which capacitated him to act as Mediator, his obedience was perfect in all instances. For though he was subject to the sinless infirmities of mankind, and needed to eat, drink and sleep like those for whom he mediated, yet he was never found chargeable with any sin. His obedience was *universal, sincere, persevering and perfect*. Accordingly Isaiah, in the 53d chapter, speaking of what was then future, as though it had really taken place, says concerning him, *He had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth*. And St. John, after his advent, declares; *Ye know that he was manifest to take away our sins, and in him is no sin*. Christ was not only negatively, but positively righteous. He not only did not transgress, but positively fulfilled all the requisitions of the law, both ceremonial and moral. *Suffer it to be so now*, said he to John the Baptist, who endeavoured to dissuade him from coming to his baptism, *for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness*. If he had been a sinner in any sense of the word, he could not have made reconciliation for the sins of the world; because the oblation of a sinful person would not have been an acceptable sacrifice to God. Agreeably we have the following scriptural declaration: *Such an High Priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners; who needeth not daily to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's; for this he did once, when he offered up himself: For the law maketh men high priests who have infirmity; but the word of the oath, which is since the law, maketh the Son who is consecrated for ever more*. Thus much concerning his *active* obedience. His *passive* consisted in those amazing sufferings he underwent, whilst he tabernacled in the flesh; the indignities, the insults and abuses, which were thrown upon him, when he went about doing good both to the souls and bodies of men; and especially in that cruel and ignominious death, which he suffered on the cross. To see therefore in one lively view,

view, what the Saviour suffered for our redemption ; follow him in your minds to Mount Calvary ; behold him suspended on the accursed tree, suffering excruciating pains in his body, having his tendons stretched, and his flesh lacerated by those nails with which he was fastened to the cross ; and also enduring that extreme anguish of mind, under the hidings of his Father's countenance, which caused him to cry out in the bitterness of his soul, *My God ! my God ! why hast thou forsaken me ?* Now by this *active and passive* obedience of Christ, many are made righteous, in the following manner, viz. by *imputation* and *inhesion*. And 1st by imputation. As Adam's sin ; so Christ's righteousness is imputed. And as by the first we are subjected to mortality, and must sooner or later die ; so by the second we shall be raised from the dead. Had not Christ stepped in to our assistance, and voluntarily suffered death for fallen man, it would have had perpetual dominion over their bodies. But *now as in Adam all die ; so in Christ shall all be made alive.* There shall be a resurrection both of the just and the unjust. The time is coming, when all that are in their graves shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and come forth ; they that have done good to the resurrection of life ; and they that have done evil to the resurrection of damnation. John v, 29. The grave cannot now boast a complete and lasting victory over the bodies of men ; for Christ having arisen the first fruits of them that sleep, has become a mighty conqueror, and virtually says to death and the grave, *Oh death, I will be thy plague ! Oh grave, I will be thy destruction !*

2dly. HIS obedience is imputed for our justification, at the bar of God, from the condemning sentence of the law. The Apostle Paul represents mankind, universally, both Jews and Gentiles, in a state of condemnation, as having come short of the moral law, or the law of their nature. By this, we are all condemned, whether young or old, till we are justified by the righteousness or obedience of Christ. This justification, to those incapable of moral agency, comes, as does the resurrection, without their seeking. But to the adult it is the consequence of faith, repentance, and renewed temper. But immediately on their faith in Christ, they are *justified from all things, from which they could not be justified by the law, either of nature or of Moses.* Now to see the necessity of this, we must observe, that it is inconsistent with the character of an holy and righteous God, to pronounce any one righteous unless he comes up to the demands of the law in all respects. But since the fall, no man is without sin ; there is not a just man on earth, who doeth good and sinneth not. Hence it is impossible that any of the sons of Adam should be justified



justified at the bar of God, unless they have a righteousness superior to their own. Now this righteousness they enjoy by *imputation*. Even as David described the blessedness of the man unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works. Romans iv, 6. *Christ has fulfilled the law, has magnified and made it honorable; has obeyed its precept and suffered its penalty; and by this means has achieved a righteousness highly delectable to his Father. Hence we read, that the Lord is well pleased for his righteousness' sake.* Now this righteousness is the matter of the believer's justification before God; and it avails to his benefit by imputation; or in other words, it is set down to his account; as St. Paul tells Philemon, *if Onesimus had wronged or owed him any thing, to put that on his account.* In short, as a pious writer on another subject observes, \**"all manner of imputation is a metaphor taken from books of account between debtor and creditor. To impute any act of sin or obedience is to set it down to his account. The great God is represented in condescension to our manner of acting and conceiving things, as keeping an exact book of records, by which our final account shall be determined. And as the most perfect obedience is a debt which we owe to him as our Creator, Preserver and Benefactor; so on the breach of his law we owe him some proper satisfaction. In this view, we are all, as the sons of an apostate father, charged as insolvent debtors in the book of God. Innumerable sins are set down, or imputed to our account. And were things to go on in this course, we should, ere long, be arrested by the divine justice; and being incapable of payment, should be cast into the prison of hell to come out no more. But God, in compassion to our calamitous state, has found out a surety and a ransom for us; has provided a satisfaction in the obedience and sufferings of his Son. It is on the account of this, and from the complacency which God has in it, that all who are finally justified meet the divine acceptance, and are delivered from that condemnation which has passed upon us all, as appears from the verse immediately preceding my text. In this case, according to the metaphor mentioned above, the righteousness of Christ is in the book of God imputed or set down to their account, as that by which the debt is balanced, and they are entitled to such exemptions and favors as righteous persons might expect from God. But then it is a fixed rule in the divine administration, that this obedience of Christ shall be imputed to none but such as believe in him, or have the seeds of holiness in their hearts. But immediately upon this, they are treated as innocent persons, discharged from their obligations to punishment,*

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\* DOCTOR DODDRIDGE.

and instated in the divine favor." Now agreeably to this, our righteousness in scripture is plainly asserted to be in Christ; God hath made him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God through him. 2 Corinthians, vth chapter, 21st verse. In the same figurative manner are the following texts of scripture to be understood, viz. that we are justified by the obedience of Christ. *All we like sheep have gone astray, but the Lord hath laid on him the iniquities of us all.* Isaiah lv, 6. *I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ my Lord, for which I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.* Accordingly Christ is expressly called our righteousness, and the Lord our righteousness, as in the Prophet Jeremiah. In a sense analogous to this, he is called, *our surety*, or *our sponsor*; and, for every believer, hath cancelled his obligation to punishment. His whole obedience on earth was for the sake of sinners. *In the fulness of time God sent forth his Son, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, for what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son, in the likeness of sinful flesh; and for sin, or being made a sacrifice for sin, hath condemned sin in the flesh; that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit.* These texts are only a small part of what might be quoted to the same purpose. So that it appears, no doctrine is more amply supported, than that of our justification through the obedience of Christ. I have observed already, that these expressions are figurative; and the true literal meaning of them, I suppose, is the following, viz. That as man had fallen and broken the divine law, it was necessary that something should be done to repair the injury, and save, harmless, the perfections of God in the justification and salvation of guilty men. If an easy pardon had been granted them, without any satisfaction made, the character of the Deity, as a righteous and holy Governor, would have been lessened in the view of his moral creatures. They would have supposed that sin was a light and trivial matter, and would have been encouraged to trample on his laws and despise his authority for the future. But, to preserve, in the view of surrounding intelligences, the dignity of his government, and the rectitude of his character, he saw fit to pardon their offences only on condition of his own Son, being a voluntary substitute, and suffering in their stead; hereby plainly demonstrating, that his laws were not to be transgressed with impunity; that *sin is the abominable thing which his soul hateth*; and that he main-

tains a moral government over rational and free agents. Though no example exactly similar to this can be produced among men, yet the matter may be in a degree illustrated, by the following story of a King, who, in order to discourage the heinous practice of adultery among his subjects, ordained, that whoever was guilty of this crime in future, should be punished with the loss of both his eyes. His only son was the first transgressor. He had great affection for him, and could not contemplate the idea of making him completely wretched, without the most painful sensations; and yet the dignity of his law and government *must* be maintained. In this exigency, in order at once to manifest his justice as a legislator, and his compassion as a father, he put out one of his own, and one of the eyes of his son. Thus, in a way somewhat analagous, God hath set forth his Son, *to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past; that he might be just, and the justifier of him who believeth in Jesus.* So that now in granting pardon to the penitent, on the sufferings and merit of his Son, who willingly submitted to die in their room, he at once displays both his righteousness and compassion. And speaking in reference to this method of saving mankind, the Psalmist says, *Mercy and truth have met together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other.*

BEFORE I proceed to the next particular, I shall only make this observation, viz. that though it is abundantly evident from what has been already said, that Christ's obedience is imputed in its legal result, or meritorious effects, to the believer, for his justification from the condemning sentence of the law; yet it is not his *inherent*, or *personal* obedience. As sin in this sense cannot be transferred from one person to another; so neither can righteousness. Sin and righteousness, in this sense, are the effects of moral agency; of personal obedience, and disobedience; the abuse or right improvement of our own mental and moral faculties. Hence saith St. John, *little children, be not deceived, he that doth righteousness is righteous.* There seems to be the greater necessity of mentioning this; since it is known in fact, that some persons trust to the imputed righteousness of Christ alone, not only for justification at the bar of God in the present world, but for salvation at the tribunal of Christ in the future; and are ready to say that Christ has done all, and men have nothing to do in order to be saved. This is a dangerous mistake, founded on the false apprehension that the personal obedience of the Saviour is, in the same sense, the personal obedience of the sinner, or rather of the believer. That this cannot be true, is evident from this single consideration; that then every person, participating of Christ's righteousness through faith, must be equally holy, and equally entitled to reward.



reward. But the whole scope of the Bible teaches the contrary. It tells us that some are more righteous than others; and that different degrees of happiness will be assigned to men in the future state; that whilst some shall shine only *as the brightness of the firmament*, others *shall shine as the stars* which are much more resplendent, *for ever and ever*. All therefore that can possibly be meant by the imputation of Christ's righteousness to the believer is, that they are delivered from the condemnation of God's law, by means of it, and placed under a covenant of grace, by the terms of which, if they are sincere, though not perfect in their obedience, they shall be accepted, and raised hereafter to a degree of happiness exactly proportioned to their improvements in holy and virtuous obedience.

THIS leads me to say thirdly, that by *the obedience of one many are made inherently righteous*. This inherent holiness is absolutely necessary to qualify any person for the kingdom of heaven; *for without holiness no man shall see the Lord*. Now this is the effect of Christ's obedience unto death, and not the mere consequence of fallen man's own endeavours without divine assistance, and the operations of the spirit of God upon his heart. Man is now so lost to every principle of holiness, so sunk in sense, and under the dominion of corrupt fleshly appetites, that unless his powers are strengthened by divine assistance, he would for ever go on in a way of disobedience and rebellion. Christ therefore, that he might perfect his work of redemption, and become a complete Saviour, has not only vindicated the believer from the damnable sentence of a broken law, but tenders, by his spirit, help to comply with the conditions of the gospel covenant. This spirit, in his beneficial operations, our Saviour purchased by his sufferings; and when he ascended to heaven, sent him down to assist mankind under their great weaknesses; to alleviate their burthens and to comfort their hearts; to arouse them to a serious consideration of their spiritual interests; to mortify their lusts; to inspire them with sorrow for their sins; to lead them to repentance; to sanctify their nature; and animate them to the conscientious performance of GOOD WORKS; or in the language of scripture, *to reprove, or convince the world, of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment*. Now the spirit, which may be resisted, operates on the hearts of men in a way consentaneous to their rational nature. And as reasonable creatures we ought to cooperate with him, and in this way to be *workers together with God*; that we may be *sealed to the day of redemption*; or in the express language of scripture, *we must work out our salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God that worketh in us both to will and to do of his own good pleasure*.

BEFORE

BEFORE I come to the improvement, it is proper that I should say something to that particular mode of expression in the text, from which some men have inferred the doctrine of *universal salvation*. The word *many*, in the former part of the text, intends *all*, as I have already told you. In the latter clause it is to be understood in a sense equally extensive. Now what rational and consistent meaning can we put on this expression, if we do not grant that *all* will be finally saved? As, therefore, I do not believe the eventual salvation of all men, it becomes me to show how this term can be explained in consistency with my own, and the common persuasion. I answer in the *first* place, that by the obedience of Christ, *all* shall be raised from the dead, which is one thing evidently intended by *all being made righteous*. 2dly. The sacrifice of Christ was *intentionally* for *all*; and there is virtue enough in his death to atone, or satisfy for the sins of *all* the sons of Adam. Hence we read, *that he died for all; that he tasted death for every man; that he was a propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world*; from which, and sundry other similar passages of scripture, we learn, that *universal redemption* is a true doctrine. My meaning is, Christ did not so die for any particular number of mankind, as to exclude the remainder, or leave them in a hopeless condition; but by removing impediments out of the way, has rendered salvation possible to *all*, so that if they do not attain it, the fault is wholly their own. But 3dly. The nature of religion, as well as the nature of man, makes it for ever necessary that we should maintain a distinction, between the *offer*, and the *acceptance* of salvation on the terms of the gospel. The offer we must believe is by God in sincerity made to *all*, and unless we would reflect great dishonor on the sincerity of our heavenly Father, must believe that spiritual assistances are tendered to *all*, sufficient to enable them to repent and believe. But then though this be very true, the nature of religion obliges us to conclude, that it is in the *power*, and experience teaches us that it is often times in the *will* of man, to resist the strivings of the spirit; *to reject the counsel of God against themselves, and receive his grace in vain*. This results from that liberty in man which he still retains, since the apostacy; and is necessary to constitute him a free agent, in the most proper sense of the word: for the idea, that liberty consists altogether in voluntariness, and is not to be opposed to necessity, must be rejected, as without sufficient foundation either in reason or scripture. Now, if this idea of liberty be rational, that the redemption from the curse of the law be by Christ purchased for *all*; and grace sufficient to enable them to comply with the conditions of the gospel covenant, be offered to *all*, yet still it is in the compass of man's *power* to reject the proffered

ferred good. And that this is often done by the sinful children of men, scripture and experience abundantly convince us. Some become holy, whilst others remain wicked. And to these different characters, a proper retribution is assigned by the *mercy* and *justice* of God, in the future world. The righteous at death will be admitted to eternal life; and why may we not suppose that the wicked, at the same period, shall be sent down to eternal punishment? We have as much reason from revelation to believe the one as the other. St. Matthew, speaking by inspiration, tells us, *these*, that is the wicked of whom he had just before been speaking, *shall go away into everlasting punishment; but the righteous into life eternal*. Yet it is to be observed that the epithet in the Greek, is in both places the same, and therefore from this text we have as much reason to believe the eternal damnation of the wicked, as the eternal salvation of the righteous. But *some* tell us that the words *for ever*, *everlasting*, &c. do not always intend or imply a strict eternity. It is readily granted. But does the text just now quoted, sufficiently prove the eternal happiness of the righteous, as all believe? Why does it not also prove the endless misery of the wicked? The one is expressed in as strong terms as the other. Still it has been said by the fautors of universal salvation, that God is held to fulfil his promises, but not his threatenings; because if he does not fulfil his promises, he does an injury to his creatures, as disappointing them of an expected good; but if he forbears to execute his threatenings, he leaves his creatures better than they expected. Very true. But where is the truth and rectoral holiness of the great Governor of the world, on this supposition? *Let God be true though every man be a liar*. Others tell us, that though all who die impenitent shall be doomed to misery *awfully long and severe*, yet that they shall sooner or later be recovered by means of their torments, to an holy temper, and their punishments shall finally cease. But how can they certainly tell this? From what text in the Bible, consistently interpreted, do they infer this conclusion? How do they certainly know that the future world will be a world of probation? St. John, in the Apocalypse, seems to represent this matter in a different light; for speaking of the time of death, or of the general judgment, he says, *He that is unjust let him be unjust still; and he that is filthy let him be filthy still; and he that is righteous let him be righteous still; and he that is holy let him be holy still*. Rev. xxii chapter, 11 verse. These words, I think, cannot possibly be better explained than by interpreting them to this sense, that there will be no alteration in men's characters after death, and the time of probation ends with the present world. But granting we are mistaken in our interpretation of them, and the  
time



time of probation shall continue in the future world, through many successive states, how can we certainly say, that those who die impenitent in this world, shall be recovered to a penitent temper in the future? If we acknowledge that men, in order to be righteous or wicked, must have liberty to chuse or refuse, to repent or rebel; and that such a liberty constitutes them moral agents, the subjects of praise or blame, of rewards or punishments, how can we certainly know how they will conduct under any given circumstances? Is it possible for us, on this supposition, to pronounce that any quantity of punishment, let it be ever so long and severe, will reclaim them to a better temper! And yet it is a matter of publick notoriety, that the best writers, in favor of universal salvation, believe that men are possessed of the liberty abovementioned, and that without an holy temper none can be happy. In asserting, therefore, that *all* shall be saved, such persons contradict their own principles, and cut up the ground on which they stand; or at least form conclusions, which, from their premises, are infallibly precarious. Since therefore every text of scripture which seems to countenance the doctrine of *the salvation of all men*, is fully explained on the supposition of the doctrine of universal redemption, as I have above explained it; and since the notion that a certain degree of punishment, will inevitably recover the wicked to an holy temper, militates with the essential liberty of man; and especially, since we know that the instituted means of grace, and all God's providential dispensations, intermingled with mercy and punishment, with severity and kindness, have never, in this world, (confessedly a state of probation,) been sufficient to reclaim certain characters; but notwithstanding they die in a state of impenitency, and consequently out of favor with God; we may conclude, that the reasonings of those who are advocates for the final salvation of all men, are extremely inconclusive and precarious. And hence we cannot act a more rational part, than to believe in the *express words*, and *most probably* in the *very sense* of scripture, that the *wicked shall go away into everlasting punishment*. But when I say this I will not dissemble, that the doctrine of eternal torments for the temporary and transient acts of men, is attended with *great* difficulties, when viewed in the light of reason, and some *small* ones when contemplated in the glass of revelation. It is impossible for me with certainty to declare, that all men shall not, through the goodness of God, and the superabounding merit of his son's obedience to death, be finally reduced from misery, after an awful period of sufferings, intense in degree and long in duration. Greatly rejoiced should I be, could I pronounce this with certainty from the sacred pages: for nothing more delights me than the  
 contemplation

contemplation of the happiness of the *whole world*. But the force of truth, according to my present ideas, constrains me to believe otherwise. However, let this doctrine be decided as it will, yet of this one thing we may be absolutely certain, that sinners act with great imprudence, who allow themselves in wickedness, under an expectation that they will be gainers by their impenetency in a course of sin; for though we should allow that there is great pleasure in sinning, even much greater than in keeping the divine commands; yet if God the supreme Lawgiver, be wise as well as righteous, we may presume, that under his government, the pains attending the punishment annexed to the breach of his laws, shall exceed all the pleasures of sin; for otherwise he has so framed his laws as to be, on the whole, an encouragement to rebels. Now our ideas of God teach us that this cannot possibly be; because he would not, on this supposition, be a wise Legislator. If there be really a future state of rewards and punishments, both the punishments and the rewards, must be very inconsiderable indeed, not to make it worth a man's while to live a life of obedience: For if God's laws were given to secure this obedience, he certainly must have annexed such punishments so long and severe to the breach of them, as to make it the interest of all to obey; and their exceeding great folly to transgress. It is in vain therefore for persons to spend their time in zealous disputes about the *nature* or the *duration of hell torments*, with a view to solace or encourage themselves in sin; for let this doctrine of final salvation for all men be decided as it will; of this we must have the fullest conviction, and the most indubitable assurance, that the impenitent sinner shall, upon balancing the pains and pleasures of sin, find himself a loser; and must in the end confess that he sinned contrary to all the dictates of wisdom and prudence, and stands justly obnoxious to the imputation of extreme folly: *The fear of the Lord is wisdom, and to depart from evil is understanding*. Thus, to make the word *many*, in the latter clause of the verse, as extensive as it is in the former, without recurring to the doctrine, that all men will eventually be saved, by the obedience of one, we have only gone upon the principle of *universal redemption*, which is doubtless an important truth, and have taken into our consideration the liberty of the will in all matters of real and personal righteousness, and its frequent abuse in the refusal of the greatest good; for the many, in the fullest sense of the word, shall be made righteous, as delivered from the power of the grave, in which no moral agency can be exerted; yet none are made righteous or inherently holy, excepting those who voluntarily concur with the gracious purposes of God in the death of his dear Son; consequently, though Christ died

died for all, that all through him might live spiritually and eternally, as well as naturally; yet not all not concurring in this plan of grace, not rightly improving their own moral powers, they do not become inherently holy; and therefore *perish*, though for them *Christ died*.

IN these discourses, I have run a parallel between the sin of Adam, and the obedience of Christ, and their respective effects on the children of men, the one reducing to death, the other raising to life; the one making them sinners, and the other righteous; the one condemning, and the other justifying, &c. Yet to the honor of my Saviour, and in compliance with the declarations of scripture, I am constrained to declare that the antithesis, or parallel, is not, in all respects, exact; for the obedience of Christ avails to deliver from more penal effects, than those to which we were subjected by Adam's disobedience. There is more merit in the one, than demerit in the other. Hence the Apostle, in this very chapter, says; *But not as the offence so also is the free gift; for if through the offence of one, many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many.* And again, *not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift: for the judgment was by one sin to condemnation; but the free gift is of many offences unto justification; for if by one man's offence death reigned by one, much more they who receive abundance of grace, and of the gift of righteousness, shall reign in life by Jesus Christ;* which in few words may be explained to the following sense; the obedience of Christ not only delivers the believer from all the penal effects of Adam's sin, but from the evil consequences of their own transgressions, be they ever so numerous.

### IMPROVEMENT.

1st. FROM the representation given above, we learn, that we are under infinite obligations to God for the gift of his Son Jesus Christ, for the redemption of fallen man from all the effect of Adam's and our own personal offences. Though it does not become us to say, that God could not in any other way have redeemed man from the wretched consequences of the *fall*, than by the death of his only begotten Son; yet we know that this was a most glorious method, by which at once to display, his dignity as a righteous Governor, and his infinite compassion to fallen man. He hath in the scheme of redemption secured the rights of his government, and demonstrated the infinite benevolence of his heart; and as the Apostle expresses it, *has abounded towards us in all*



all wisdom and prudence. O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God; how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! Let us adore with most profound submission and gratitude, this astonishing method of salvation by the incarnation of his Son; and whilst we rejoice that every man may be saved if he will, let us endeavour, by the right improvement of our own powers, to be in the happy number of those to whom the Redeemer shall say, *Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.* All that Christ has done and suffered for the apostate sons of Adam, will no further avail the adult, than to raise them from the dead, unless they believe and repent, and are found in the number of those who comply with gospel grace, in the religious improvement of those moral powers, which God has given them, for the strengthening of which he proffers the assistance of his holy spirit. Salvation is now made possible to us, but none will finally secure it, notwithstanding all that Christ has done and suffered, unless we diligently improve those means of grace which are within our reach, and in the compass of our power. Though all moral impediments on the part of God are now removed by the death and mediatory undertaking of his Son; yet none can be saved who have arrived to years of reason, and do not improve it, in a hearty compliance with those terms and conditions which the gospel proposes. Some persons have made most dangerous mistakes on this subject, as supposing that every thing is done for them by Christ; whereas the true state of the case is this only, that our Saviour has delivered us from the condemning sentence of the law, and placed us under the gracious constitution of the gospel covenant, by which perfect obedience is not required for salvation. But then it requires a *sincere* and *holy* obedience to the law of faith, in the performance of which our own endeavours are necessary: if we do not exert them, it had been better for us if Christ had never appeared in our world, and died in our stead. His death therefore does not supersede the necessity of the diligent improvement of our time and talents; and when we have offended, of repentance; but only makes them available to pardon and final security. Too much cannot be said on this subject in this connexion; for men are not mechanically made holy, nor sent to heaven without their own voluntary consent. We shall be raised from the dead, whether we chuse or not; for *there shall be a resurrection both of the just and unjust*; but none go to heaven if they have arrived to years of discretion, without a proper improvement of their own powers, in the use of those means which Christ has purchased, and now sincerely tenders to the children of men.

LET me therefore, in the second place, exhort you all to put your trust in Christ for pardon and acceptance; and let it be done in the proper use of your own mental abilities. You are not like the Jews of old, *to go about to establish a righteousness of your own, in order for justification in the sight of God*, for your best performances as falling short of the law, which requires *perfect unspinning obedience*, in this view are of no avail, and *are but filthy rags*. But that you may be interested in the perfect righteousness of Christ, and may be not only justified, but sanctified, and made meet for the kingdom of heaven, you must lean to him and depend on him, not only for pardon by his obedience, but for sanctification by his spirit. As your greatest exertions will not bring you to a full compliance with the moral law; so neither will your own endeavours, without the assistances of Christ's spirit, possess you of a covenant holiness. Look to him therefore, depend on him, as a whole and complete Saviour; *whole and complete*, as not only justifying you by his righteousness, but as sanctifying you by his holy spirit. Plead therefore his righteousness for your justification at the bar of God, and depend on his gospel and spirit, in the diligent use of the means of grace for those holy qualifications, without which you cannot be prepared for the happiness of heaven. Had it not been for the kind advent of the Saviour, we must all have been for ever condemned by the law to a state of perpetual misery; but since his arrival, none shall be made happy in heaven, but those who are justified by his righteousness, and sanctified by his spirit. And this spirit we enjoy, to any saving purpose, only in the way of gospel obedience, and by a serious attention to the means of grace. Let me then exhort you to *pray*, to *read*, and *hear*, to live a life of holy obedience, and when you have done the utmost in your abilities, say, *that you are but unprofitable servants; that you have done no more than your duty*, and cast yourselves on the mercy of God through Christ, hoping for eternal salvation only through his sacrifice, who died the just for the unjust, that he might bring them to God, not only in acts of worship *here*, but to endless felicity in the coming world.

3dly. LET us live as becometh righteous and holy persons. We should not only be careful that our hearts are right with God, but that our external practice is right in the sight of the world. If the saints cannot fall *finally*, they certainly can fall *faulty*. That our religion may not be *evil spoken of*, it becomes them, *to let their light so shine before men, that others seeing their good works may glorify their heavenly Father. They should provide things honest, as it is translated, but honorable, as it should have been,*

been, *in the sight of all men, that their good may not be evil spoken of.* It is highly incumbent in true believers, to walk in wisdom before others, and demonstrate by the holiness and piety of their conversation, that they are the saved of the Lord, that they have felt the power of religion on their souls, in its renewing and transforming influences. In this way we best recommend the gospel of Christ; and exhibit the most illustrious proofs of its divinity to others. In this way we shall most effectually disarm unbelievers of their prejudices against Christ, and the purity of his doctrines; and finally in this way, contribute successfully to spread the triumphs of his cross!

F I N I S.



E R R A T A.

**P**AGE 8, line 7, from the bottom, for *here*, read *ever*. Page 11, line 15, from the bottom, for *was*, read *bad*. Page 12, line 19, for *explicable*, read *inexplicable*. Page 19, line 8, for *denied*, read *damned*; line 34, for *many* read *any*. Page 28, line 4, from the bottom, after *rational*, dele *that*, and insert, *it follows that though*.





